

Taken Lives

(It is 1783 in London, England, during the American Revolution. A mother and daughter are sitting in a living room that looks very old fashioned. The mother is wearing an old red-ish dress that it is very worn. The daughter, about 14, is wearing a blue dress that is not at all fancy. The walls of the room are covered in blue wallpaper with artistic curls on them. The two padded chairs they are sitting on are the only chairs in the room. In front of the chairs there is a small wooden table. A fire in the fireplace provides the only light. The two women are knitting olive colored tube socks. To the right of the two chairs (from the audience's view) is a white door.)

(Open Curtains)

Mother: How were your lessons today?

Daughter: (automatically) They were good, today we learned about the Magna Carta, and how it restricted the King's power.

Mother: (Knowingly) That's a good thing to know about; that ancient document helped all of the people of Britain.

Daughter: Was there anything interesting in the newspaper today?

Mother: Not really, just more news of fat ol' King George getting defeated in the Americas.

Daughter: (Confused) Why are we even fighting this war?

Mother: Because those Americans want their precious freedom. (exasperated) But somehow they still have troops to fight with.

Daughter: (Complaining) Then why do father and uncle have to fight them.

Mother: (Still exasperated and shouting a little) I don't know! Stop asking me these questions!

(The daughter stops knitting and stares at her mother)

Mother: (Quiet and defeated) Sorry... I didn't mean to yell... It's just that you are not the only one to miss your father. He has been gone so long that I barely know what to do.

(There is a sudden, sharp knock on the door)

Daughter: Who could that be?

Mother: (shrugging with a little enthusiasm) I don't know, I wasn't expecting anyone.

(The person knocks again)

Daughter: I'll get it.

(She gets up and goes to the door. When she opens it a young man, maybe 20 years old, in a rumpled army uniform is there.)

Messenger: I come bearing bad news: the war is over, the Colonists have won their independence.

Daughter: (Very enthusiastic) Really?!

Messenger: Yes.

Daughter: (Shouting over her shoulder) Mother, come here, the war is over!

(The mother gets up and walks to stand behind her daughter)

Mother: Yes.

Messenger: The war is over.

Mother: (She practically jumps) What?! Is my husband coming home?

Daughter: (About to explode) Yes! Yes! Is he?!

(The messenger looks at the piece of paper in his hand and takes a long pause)

Messenger: (Sadly) Your husband... He died in the last battle of the war.

Daughter: (Flatly) What?

Mother: (In denial and distastefully) Is this some kind of joke. He can't be dead. He was the best soldier in his regiment.

Messenger: In the last battle of the war our General surrendered to General Washington after hundreds of our soldiers were killed.

Mother: (In a burst of rage that no one could have expected) What is our government doing? This damned king has cost us so many husbands that this is going too far!

Messenger: I am truly very sorry. But there is nothing that I can do.

(The daughter just stares at the messenger. She is quietly crying)

Mother: (looking down at her daughter but speaking to the messenger) Please leave.

(The messenger leaves and the mother slowly closes the door)

(Curtain)

Footsteps

Scene One *(It is nighttime in the forest. The trees loom overhead looking like leering monsters. An owl hoots. A girl comes skipping down the dirt path. She is wearing a blue frock with white tights, Mary Janes and a red cloak. She has a lantern that is glowing dimly in her hand. She looks to be about eleven or twelve. Her black hair hanging in curls. Her skin is pale and her eyes are an icy blue. She is aware about her looks, since she is considered the most beautiful girl in town. Most people would hurry along at night but she is walking as if it is day and has nothing to fear even though it is pitch black. She is talking to herself happily. Her name is Isabelle Bailey Lee McShorry.)*

Isabelle: *(Sings to herself as she skips down the path)* Happy birthday to me, happy birthday to me, Happy birthday dear *(Takes deep breath)* Isabelle Bailey Lee McShorry. Happy birthday to *(Takes on high note)* meeeeeeeeeeeeeee!
(She skips for a while longer in silence and then stops by an apple tree)

Isabelle: I hope mother won't be worried that I'm coming home so late. I just had to stay for dinner at Granny's though, she looked so frail. *(Her face droops but perks back up after a second)* But she really seemed to like the breads and cakes I got her. And she got her basket back!
(She stops and picks an apple from the tree which she puts in the pocket of her frock.)

Isabelle: Mother might like an apple to eat, and it might distract her from the fact that I was due quite some time ago. *(She pulls a gold pocket watch on a chain out of her pocket and studies it under the light of the lantern.)*

Isabelle: *(Exclaims)* Goodness gracious, It's nearly twelve! I must hurry.

(She puts the watch back in her pocket and proceeds down the path singing songs to herself. After a while she stops and tilts her head towards the bushes. She falls silent. She hears nothing for a while, but then there is a faint noise. A rustle. Isabelle shrugs and continues down the path. Then the noise starts again. Isabelle stops and looks around, clearly nervous.)

Isabelle: *(nervously)* Is anyone there?

(The rustling stops and a bunny hops out across the road chewing on something. Isabelle laughs.)

Isabelle: Silly bunny! You had me scared for a second.

(The bunny cocks its head at Isabelle and hops over to her. Isabelle picks it up and clutches the bunny to her chest putting down the lantern. The bunny purrs and snuggles into Isabelle's arms, happy to be warm.)

Isabelle: I'm naming you-*(she gets cut off by the rustling noise which has returned.)*

Isabelle: *(To the rabbit in a panicky voice)* That's just one of your friends, right?

(The rustling noise gets louder and Isabelle is clearly scared. She is looking around and is chewing on her hair.) Please tell me that's one of your friends!

(The rabbit is nervous too. He hops out of her arms and bounds away in the other direction of the noise.)

Isabelle: *(sarcastic)* Gee, thanks. *(voice breaks)* I'll take that as it's not one of your friends. *(She picks up the lantern and turns in a circle holding the lantern face level, trying to see what is making the noise)*

(You can hear footsteps and Isabelle is paralyzed, frozen in fear.)

Isabelle: *(quivering, stuttering voice)* I-i-is anyone there? S-show yourself!

*(The rustling gets even louder and you can hear the footsteps also getting louder from behind Isabelle. The rustling stops and you can only hear footsteps getting louder and closer and louder and closer. Isabelle whips around, the lantern swinging from her hand to strike the person but it is too late. **(The room turns black so you can see nothing)** Isabelle lets out a bloodcurdling scream.)*

Curtain Closes

Disaster at the mall

*(Curtain opens. Spotlight is on two girls. **Serina** is tall and skinny with long straight blonde hair. **Rose** is shorter with shoulder length red hair. They are both wearing old band T-shirts, tucked into ripped jeans. They are walking down a crowded pathway at the mall, both holding a few large shopping bags. Many other people are milling around the mall, including two preppy looking girls. **Emily** is wearing two inch heels and a short, tight dress, her long blonde hair in a french braid. **Laura** is wearing skinny jeans and a big sweater with a gray scarf. Both sets of girls are walking towards a small H&M at the end of the hallway. Many people are browsing around the store.)*

Serina: So, Rose. What do you think I should wear for Prom? *(Walking over to a rack)*

Rose: *(pause)* If you want to impress Matt *(Looks through a rack, trying to find a dress)*
wear this! *(She starts laughing as she holds up an ankle length knitted dress)*

Serina: Ewww! I'm not even that fashionable, and I think that's ugly. *(They both laugh)*

*(Spotlight moves to **Laura** and **Emily**)*

Emily: I know I'm going to be prom queen, so I need to wear something really nice. You know *(pause)* to impress all of the boys.

Laura: *(looking at her phone)* Totes, everyone likes you! Those other girls don't stand a chance!

*(Spotlight goes back to **Serina** and **Rose**. **Serina** has found a short light pink dress.)*

Serina: *(Holding up dress)* This is so pretty! *(Looks at price tag)* And it's only forty five dollars, I love it! *(squeals)*

Rose: You have to try it on! And it's so cheap! *(squeals)*

*(Spotlight goes to **Emily** and **Laura**.)*

Laura: *(Holds up a really short blue dress with a diamond bodice)* This is only 2,890 dollars! That's a deal!

Emily: That is so cute! I have to try it on!

*(**Serina** and **Emily** both arrive at the dressing room at the same time.)*

Emily: *(Talking to **Serina**)* Nerd alert! *(making a disgusted face)*

*(**Serina** rolls her eyes and ignores her. They both enter separate dressing rooms.*

***Serina** and **Emily** emerge from dressing room at the same time, and both run over to the mirror.)*

Emily: I look so pretty in this i can't even believe it!

Serina: *(to herself)* I love this dress.

Emily: Unfortunately *(pause)* you look ugly in it. *(lets out a small laugh)*

Serina: *(Mumbling)* Come on Emily, really?

Emily: Your dress looks like it's from a thrift store.

Serina: We are actually wearing dresses from the same company, so...

Emily: Ughh, your smart talk is so annoying! *(Flips her hair)*

Serina: *(Trying to make polite small talk)* How much money is your dress?

Emily: *(Proudly, articulating every number)* Two thousand, nine hundred and eighty dollars, you?

Serina: *(Embarrassed)* Forty five.

Emily: *(Starts laughing hysterically.)* Maybe with the extra money you can get some plastic surgery.

Serina: *(Getting annoyed with **Emily**)* Just shut up Emily, you only have a boyfriend because you're popular!

*(**Emily** faces turns red. She turns to **Serina** and shoves her on the ground, as she falls her dress gets caught on a rack and rips, **Serina** lets out a little scream as she tumbles to the ground, **Rose**, who heard the scream dashes over to **Serina** as **Emily** runs back into the dressing room.)*

Serina: Oh my god, I can't believe she pushed me over!

Rose: *(Worried)* At least that was the only thing that she did, are you ok?

Serina: I'm fine. *(Seeing the rip for the first time)* Oh my god, it ripped!

Rose: What ripped?

Serina: The dress!

(Emily dashes out of the dressing room with her dress draped over her arm.)

Emily: Have fun explaining what happened! *(Winks, and walks to the cash register.)*

Rose and Serina are still looking at the rip.)